

GRANITE HILL PLANTATION

South side of State Route 16, 1.3 miles northeast of Sparta

Sparta vicinity

Hancock County

Georgia

HABS GA-2396

GA-2396

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE

National Park Service

U.S. Department of the Interior

100 Alabama St. NW

Atlanta, GA 30303

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

GRANITE HILL PLANTATION

HABS No. GA-2396

Location: South side of State Route 16, 1.3 miles northeast of Sparta,
Hancock County, Georgia

Present Owner: Erdene Materials Corp.
Palm City, Florida

Present Use: Inactive quarry

Significance: Granite Hill Plantation historically consisted of 1,547 acres amassed by Andrew Jackson Lane, a wealthy Hancock County planter. The plantation, which is associated with the antebellum agricultural reform movement as well as granite quarrying, was one of the largest in the county. Lane's mid-1850s plantation house was moved to Macon, Georgia in 1968. Two later structures remain, including the intact ruins of a two-story octagonal provision house (HABS No. GA-2396-A) that was constructed sometime in the second half of the nineteenth century. The intact ruins of a storage silo (HABS No. GA-2396-B), built in the early twentieth century also remain. Both structures are of ashlar masonry construction. In addition, there are four later nineteenth century and early twentieth century granite quarry pits associated with the Granite Hill Plantation (HAER No. GA-156-A, 156-B, 156-C, and 156-D).

I. Physical Description of the Granite Hill Plantation Site and Surroundings

Located 1.3 miles northeast east of Sparta, Georgia, on the south side of State Route 16, Granite Hill Plantation rose to prominence in the early nineteenth century as an agricultural enterprise largely created by Andrew Jackson Lane. The plantation prospered with the spread of short-staple cotton production, and Hancock County had become the top producer of cotton by 1840. With this growth came the establishment of more permanent plantation homes, outbuildings, and slave quarters. The Granite Hill Plantation house that remained in situ until 1968 was a visible example of the wealth that cotton agriculture could produce. The plantation is located on a broad ridge top and side slopes in a former agricultural and commercial granite quarrying area that has reverted to woods and quarry lakes (Figure 1).

The plantation house was situated on high ground, approximately one-third of a mile southeast of the Sparta to Warrenton road (State Rout 16) and along the banks of Two Mile Creek. A linear drive (now Horton Road) aligned with the front façade of the house. To the rear of the house (south) were multiple outbuildings, including the extant provision house (HABS No. GA-2396-A). The remains of a possible kitchen building are also in the vicinity. In the twentieth century, a dairy barn and silo were constructed. The ruins of this structure (HABS No. GA-2396-B) are located approximately 115 yards to the west of the house site. At least four tenant houses were also located on the property, evidenced by chimney falls and wells. Four granite quarry pits (HAER No. GA-156-A, 156-B, 156-C, and 156-D) are located throughout the property, representing quarrying activity that began as early as 1850. Now covered in pines and hardwoods, remnants of agricultural terracing are visible on the remaining 339 acres of Granite Hill Plantation.

II. Granite Hill Plantation and Andrew Jackson Lane

On October 8, 1818, Jeffrey Lane (1785-1843) and Alfred Horton purchased 239 acres on Little Ogeechee Creek from Joseph Lewis that had been Lewis' home of "several years past."¹ Three years later, Horton sold his interest in the property to Lane.² This tract of land appears to have been the first of several properties accumulated by Jeffrey Lane during the next two decades. While his exact date of arrival remains uncertain, he was situated in Hancock County, which was formed in 1793 from Washington and Greene counties, by 1815, at least, when he is identified as a company captain in the local militia.³ By 1819, Lane had been elected Sheriff.⁴

¹ *Hancock County Deed Book*, M:179.

² *Ibid.*, M:454.

³ Smith, Elizabeth Wiley. *The History of Hancock County, Georgia. Volume 1: History, Heritage and Records*. Washington, Georgia: Wilkes County Publishing Company, 1974, 134.

⁴ Evans, Tad. *Georgia Newspaper Clippings: Hancock County Extracts, Volume 1, 1809-1844*. Savannah: privately printed, 2000, 60.

Throughout the 1820s and 1830s, Jeffrey Lane expanded his holdings. The 1820 census for Hancock County identified Lane as an unmarried white male in the household and the owner of nine slaves. One of the earliest available county tax digests, dated 1824, lists Lane as owning 346 acres.⁵ In 1829, he owned fourteen enslaved Africans and 646 “3rd quality” acres; in 1838, he had twenty-three slaves and 1376 acres. Each of the tax digests identifies his property as located on the Little Ogeechee. Upon his death in 1843, Jeffrey Lane’s estate was valued at over \$15,000, the majority of which he left to his nephew, Andrew Jackson Lane (A. J. Lane), with consideration to his sisters Rhoda Hopper and Nancy Davis.

According to federal census records, A. J. Lane was born in Virginia in 1822. He arrived in Hancock County, Georgia in 1842 as the beneficiary of his Uncle Jeffrey Lane’s vast and growing estate.⁶ He was also bound, by his forebear’s will, to either establish himself as a planter in Hancock County or sell out in order to pay many of his uncle’s demands. For instance, the fifth item of Jeffrey Lane’s will reads as follows:

I desire that my nephew Andrew Jackson Lane with what is due with the proceeds of my cotton and such stock as he can dispose of or may not want in working the farm and raise as fast as he can six thousand dollars which he is to lay out in property and secure it to the sole and separate use of my sisters Rhoda Hopper and Nancy Davis during life [and] at their death he is to convey it to their children and their heirs...If what is due me with the cotton on hand and surplus stock is not sufficient to raise said six thousand dollars I require him to pay the deficiencies as fast as he can make it off the plantation which he is to do in the course of five years or sooner if he can.⁷

A. J. Lane at least had a firm foundation on which he could meet these demands. An inventory of Jeffrey Lane’s estate lists his head of livestock, house contents, and itemizes twenty-nine enslaved Africans individually. Jeffrey Lane singled out one of them, instructing his nephew that “as my last and dying request that he treat my girl Eliza and her children with kindness and humanity and it is my desire that my executors pay to the said Eliza monthly during life twenty-five dollars annually.” He also requested that his executors “so soon as they can get her upon reasonable terms buy a coloured girl” named Harriett in the possession of John P. Sykes, and that Harriett receive the same annuity as Eliza.

Jeffrey Lane’s livestock included twenty-five cows and calves, three yoke of oxen, eight steered cattle, eighty sheep, fifty-three hogs for pork, 100 stock hogs, fourteen horses and two mules. Agricultural products included 23,000 pounds of ginned cotton, 48,000 pounds of seed

⁵ Smith, Elizabeth Wiley.

⁶ *Southern Cultivator* 1860, 341.

⁷ *Hancock County Will Book*, Q: 72-76.

cotton, 250 barrels of corn and 20,000 pounds of fodder. The household contents included seven beds (weighing 40 lbs. each) and accompanying bedsteads, a mahogany bureau, a pine sideboard, a set of mahogany tables, an old shot gun, a pine cupboard and a small “trinket trunk.” His entire estate was totaled at just under \$15,000, with approximately \$10,000 of that amount accounted in human chattel.

A. J. Lane (1822-1886) used the residue of his uncle’s estate to expand the plantation. On January 16, 1845, he married Frances Ann Brooking (1823-1892), the daughter of a neighboring planter. Presumably, they lived in Jeffrey Lane’s former homestead, where they began their family. Their children included Harriet (born 1845), Virginia (born 1847), Jeff (born 1849), Frances (born 1853) and Mary Roxie (born 1857).

While A. J. Lane devoted much of his energies to plantation management, he was involved in other local endeavors. He represented Hancock County in the Georgia House of Representatives from 1849-1850.⁸ Newspaper accounts from the late 1840s and early 1850s identify Lane serving as a delegate for the local Democratic Party to help select the regional state senator. Other accounts note he represented local interests in the acquisition of a railroad.⁹ He also helped organize the Hancock Steamboat Company in 1849 and the Bank of Sparta in 1856.¹⁰

During the 1840s and 1850s, he purchased additional acreage for his plantation, and the total number of slaves increased both naturally and through additional purchases. For instance, in 1844, he purchased an adjoining 187 acres from Thomas Dudley. In 1846, he purchased a lot in Sparta and 630 acres from Henry Griggs. In 1849, he purchased 520 acres from the executors of the Edward Brooking estate and 100 acres from John Coleman, both tracts adjoining the waters of Little Ogeechee Creek. In 1850, he purchased an additional 182 acres from Thomas Dudley. In 1856, he purchased six slaves from a Mr. Sanford. In 1859, he purchased 149 acres along Two Mile Creek on the north side of the Warrenton Road. Tax digests for the period show him beginning with thirty-two slaves and 1376 3rd quality acres in 1844 (roughly equaled to his inheritance from Jeffrey Lane); by 1862, he had amassed 2438 2nd quality acres and eighty-three slaves.

Similarly, the 1850 and 1860 census records, both slave and agricultural schedules, provide information on his holdings and more detailed data regarding agricultural production. In 1850, A. J. Lane owned forty-two enslaved Africans, evenly divided between male and female. On approximately 2200 acres, they produced a variety of crops, including corn, oats, wheat, cotton (sixty-eight bales), potatoes and peas. His livestock, valued at just over \$2,000 included

⁸ Shivers, Forrest. *The Land Between: A History of Hancock County, Georgia to 1940*. Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, 1990, 328.

⁹ Evans, Tad. *Georgia Newspaper Clippings: Hancock County Extracts, Volume 2, 1845-1890*. Savannah: privately printed, 2000.

¹⁰ georgiagenealogy.com 2007

eight horses, seven mules, seventeen milk cows, eight oxen, thirty other cows, sixty-five sheep and 250 swine. In an analysis of Georgia's agricultural census records, Roland Harper found an average of 466 acres and 12.8 slaves per farm in the Lower Piedmont.¹¹ A comparison of other statistics compiled by Harper suggests that A. J. Lane was, indeed, one of the wealthier property owners in the region. A cursory review of other individuals in the 1850 agricultural schedule within A. J. Lane's district, evidences he was among the upper percentile of planters in the county.

By 1860, he had broadened his production. The slave enumeration for that year included seventy-four enslaved Africans (thirty-eight male, thirty-six female) in twelve houses. The agricultural schedule identifies his 2200 acres produced a similar variety of crops to that a decade earlier, including wheat, hay, corn, oats, cotton (128 ginned bales), as well as the necessary peas and potatoes. His stock consisted of six horses, eighteen mules, twenty-five milk cows, eight oxen, thirty-seven other cattle and 300 swine. Again, using Harper's statistics for comparison, Lane's production outweighed the average for the Lower Piedmont region. He was also one of thirty-one Hancock County planters to produce over 100 bales of cotton and one of thirty-three who owned over 2,000 acres.¹² By far, the largest planter in the county was his friend and neighbor David Dickson, who produced 760 bales of cotton and had a total net worth of \$350,000.

As a young boy, Simon Simeon "Parson" Andrews was an enslaved African on the Lane plantation. On November 18, 1850, he was born in Macon at Tatum Square, "where slaves were held, housed and sold." Parson was one of three children born that day; the next morning a woman, proving to be his grandmother, arrived from the Lane plantation to take care of the children. Parson, his mother, and his brother were purchased at auction a few days later by A. J. Lane. The WPA interviewer who took Parson's story in 1936 noted him as saying "Mr. Lane owned eighty-five slaves and was known to be very kind and considerate...He describes A. J. Lane as being a kind slave-holder who fed his slaves well and whipped them but little." He also remembered playing with the master's children, and that the farm crops consisted of corn, cotton, peas, wheat and oats. He also recalls the first buggy he ever saw was owned by A. J. Lane; "it had a seat at the rear with rest which was usually occupied by a man who was called a 'waiter'; there was no top to the seat and the 'waiter' was exposed to the weather."¹³ According to county tax digests, A. J. Lane did own four "pleasure carriages" as early as 1849.

¹¹ Harper, Roland. "Development of Agriculture in Upper Georgia from 1850 to 1880." *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 6, no. 1:1922, 3-27.

¹² Shivers, 335-336.

¹³ Works Projects Administration (WPA). Interview with Samuel Simeon Andrews, 27 October 1936. Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers Project, 1936-1938. Internet online <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>, 13.

Parson was sold at age 8, and changed masters numerous times, finally laboring under a man in Union Springs, Alabama until he was emancipated at the end of the Civil War. Parson concentrated his account on the activities of the Lane plantation, even describing how A. J. Lane hid valuables in the hog pen to avoid confiscation by Union troops during the Civil War. As he had left Granite Hill around 1858, it is likely Parson picked up these stories from relatives when he returned to Sparta to reunite with his family after emancipation.¹⁴

As evidenced by both the census enumerator and county's assessment of his property, the overall quality of Lane's estate increased during the 1850s. The broader demand for cotton aside, an analysis of Hancock County planters during this period reveals an increased agricultural intuitiveness, evidenced by the formation of one of the state's most successful planters clubs and participation by the local planters in exporting their ideas to the larger agricultural community. As Bonner observed, "in the two decades before the Civil War there developed in the Lower South an agricultural reform movement which was largely indigenous to the cotton belt, and which appears to have had its origin in Hancock County in Middle Georgia."¹⁵

III. The Hancock County Planter's Club

In 1837, a group of local planters formed the Hancock County Planter's Club and its members "came to be known far and wide for their agricultural progressiveness and their optimistic enthusiasm for the agrarian way of life."¹⁶ These Hancock County planters subscribed and frequently contributed to agricultural magazines, including *The Southern Cultivator*, an agricultural journal published in Augusta and circulated throughout the South. By the late 1850s, A. J. Lane served as the Club's vice-president and submitted several articles and editorials of his own to the journal, which help paint an incredibly detailed picture of his plantation during the antebellum period. One observer noted:

In company with several other gentlemen, we had the privilege of being the guests of A. J. Lane, Esq., whose charming residence is within two miles distance of the Fair Ground. We regard, with inexpressive satisfaction, every such establishment as that of Mr. Lane. [He], as rapidly as possible, is putting his farm, of more than 2000 acres in a course of improvement. He has already commenced to thin out a wood of 100 acres to be laid down in grass in front of the dwelling. Three hundred acres of creek bottom, he designs to treat in the same way. These 400 acres will enable him, without other cost than the interest on the land, to manure a large cotton crop annually. Mr. L is, in proportion to his acres, one of the largest

¹⁴ Ibid., 10-31.

¹⁵ Bonner, James C. "Genesis of Agricultural Reform in the Cotton Belt." *Journal of Southern History* 9, no. 4 (1943): 475-500, 475.

¹⁶ Shivers, 75. Ibid., 477.

stock raisers in the county, yet his investment in stock of all kinds does not exceed \$1.50 per acre. This proportion would make an English or Belgian farmer...

Mr. Lane's cotton crop of this year averages about 800 pounds to the acre. Most of the land cultivated by him is very old, some of it having been cleared 60 or 70 years since. Both guano and stable or barn yard manure are used on cotton – the latter has produced the best results. The whole plantation gives evidence not only of progressive intelligence upon the part of the gentlemanly proprietor, but also of attentive skill upon the part of his industrious manager.¹⁷

Notably, A. J. Lane penned an article promoting the use of Bermuda Grass.¹⁸ In 1848, he purchased part of an adjoining tract of land, "of what had once been considered a fine plantation," for \$2 an acre, obtained at such a cheap price because it was pastured in grass.

A lot containing about thirty acres, through which runs a fine branch, was pretty thoroughly set with the grass. About ten acres (including the old homestead) was perfectly matted...At the time of the purchase, I found a man [Mr. Ware] occupying the houses and cultivating a few patches scattered about all over the place, avoiding those places having the grass on them. The man had no one to work but himself, and raised about half enough corn to feed himself, his wife and a pack of dogs. I allowed him to remain on the place, I think, about four years, when an unlucky spark set fire to the dwelling and burnt him out.

A. J. Lane observed that when Mr. Ware left, his herd of stock had increased dramatically over the four years. Mr. Ware's cattle were "the best in the neighborhood" and he was confident he never saw his tenant purchase one head of stock, but raised them all on the grasses. "His sows and pigs were kept entirely on the grass, to 'root hog or die,'" wrote Lane, "and root they did and kept fat and sleek." Noting that this particular tract of land was some distance from his house and "had it been nearer home, I should certainly not have disturbed it," A. J. Lane decided to bring it under cultivation in 1852 and "ordered the plows to it."

After we commenced the overseer swore we never could plow it up...I found it a pretty rough job; the plows would be first in and then out, and often jump two or three feet; the negroes would grunt, shake their heads and look wise, and one, more familiar than the rest, involuntarily spoke out: "Name o' God, maussa! You nebber will do nothin' wid dis stinkin stuff! Better build 'nudder house here for Mr. Ware, and let he old cows and horses eat de grass up."

After a tremendous amount of plowing and cross-plowing, the field was planted in corn, with a successful result of one thousand pounds per acre. The next year, he planted the field in

¹⁷ *Southern Cultivator* 1859, 367

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1860, 265-267.

cotton, yielding 1800 pounds per acre. A. J. Lane's story continues to reveal he rotated crops on this particular tract of land with incredible success, owing a large debt to its earlier stand of grass. "Am I wrong, then," he asked, "in saying that had our ancestors planted out the old fields and red hills in this grass they would have bequeathed a valuable legacy to us?"

A. J. Lane's advocacy extended beyond his experience with Bermuda Grass to also promoting the horizontal or contour plowing methods of his friend and neighbor David Dickson. No doubt, Lane benefited from his inclusion in the Hancock County Planter's Club, with its monthly meetings and frequent visits among the local plantations. "I think the planters of Hancock take and read more Agricultural paper than any other county in the State," he wrote, "They live on their plantations, have better overseers, and trust less to them than any other people in the world."¹⁹ The planters of Hancock County initiated an agricultural renaissance during the two decades prior to the Civil War, and advocated methods of farming, such as contour plowing, crop rotation and manuring.²⁰

¹⁹ Ibid., 1860, 341-342

²⁰ Range, Willard. *A Century of Georgia Agriculture 1850-1950*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1954, 21-25.

IV. Postbellum Granite Hill

The agricultural successes of the antebellum era were cut short by the Civil War. In March 1862, Captain A. J. Lane joined the newly formed Co. I, 49th Georgia, soon rising to the rank of Colonel.²¹ Wounded at the battle of Seven Pines on May 31, 1862 and then at Mechanicsville on June 26, 1862, Colonel Lane recuperated in Richmond, Virginia until resigning in May 1863.²² He returned to Hancock County and, in 1865, along with his neighbors Edgeworth Bird and Richard Malcolm Johnson, helped Robert Toombs evade capture by Union troops.²³

County tax digests compiled for 1863 identify A. J. Lane with eighty-five enslaved Africans valued at \$85,000, typical of the inflationary prices in the Civil War South. An agricultural tax record for 1864 shows a reduction to twenty-five slaves. Notably, Parson Andrews recalled two of his uncles having escaped from the Lane plantation during the war, and hiding out in the woods.²⁴ In 1867, Sallie Bird, a neighbor to the Lane family, remarked “Just imagine how we are all situated, not a negro on the place, but Nina....The Lanes have no hands yet either, and they have several out looking for them.”²⁵ The 1867 tax digest for that year reports, however, that Lane employed thirty-seven hands between the ages 12 and 65. The 1870 agricultural census records the Lane farm as one of seven in the county to produce at least 100 bales of cotton.²⁶ Clearly, Lane managed to transition with some success into the new agricultural economy.

A. J. Lane’s antebellum interest in rail transportation was augmented in the post-war years when the Macon and Augusta Railroad, roughly paralleling the Sparta to Warrenton road, came through Hancock County in 1868. He contracted to clear the right of way on his property at Granite Hill, and the 1870 census lists his son Jeff, age 20, as a railroad contractor.²⁷ By 1880, Lane established himself in Macon. His railroad construction included the Brunswick and

²¹ Shivers, 157.

²² Rozier, John. *The Granite Farm Letters: The Civil War Correspondence of Edgeworth and Sally Bird*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988, 109-112.

²³ Johnson, Richard Malcolm. *Autobiography of Colonel Richard Malcolm Johnson*. Washington: The Neale Company, Available online at <http://docsouth.unc.edu>, 1900, 126-130.

²⁴ Works Projects Administration.

²⁵ Rozier, 289.

²⁶ Shivers, 197.

²⁷ Ibid., 206. *United States Census* 1870.

Macon, Eufala and Montgomery, a portion of the New Orleans Pacific, the St. Johns and Lake Eustis, and the Pensacola and Atlantic.²⁸

A. J. Lane died in 1886, with his will equally divided his estate among the heirs.²⁹ Eventually, after a land swap, his son-in-law Seaborn Reese and daughter Mary Edwards received a 1000-acre tract identified as the old A. J. Lane homestead. This tract, bounded on the north by the Macon and Augusta Railroad and on the west and south by Two Mile Branch, included the 339 remaining acres of Granite Hill Plantation.³⁰ Reese married Lane's daughter Frances in 1872, the year he was elected to the State Senate. In 1882, he was appointed to serve the end of Alexander H. Stephen's term in the U.S. Congress, where he remained until 1887. In debt to the Scottish American Company for approximately \$32,000, Seaborn Reese sold the Granite Hill tract to Henry I. Sheldon of Chicago, Illinois in 1894.³¹ In 1896, Sheldon sold the property to the Middle Georgia Land and Immigration Company for \$10,000.³² Two years later, the property changed hands again, this time to purchaser W. B. Lee.³³

V. Granite Hill Plantation

A. J. Lane was a successful planter, and he eventually replaced his earlier house, retained from his uncle Jeffrey Lane's tenure. The new Granite Hill plantation house was constructed during the mid-1850s (Figures 2-3). In a newspaper article, Terrell Moore stated that the four oldest Lane children, Harriet (born 1846), Virginia (born 1848), Jefferson (born 1850) and Frances (born 1853) "were born prior to the completion of the 'new house.'"³⁴ This suggests that the house was completed prior to the birth of their next child, Mary Roxie, in 1857. As Mary Roxie Edwards later explained "He called it [Granite Hill] because of the quantity of granite all over the place."³⁵

²⁸ Young, Ida, Julius Gholson and Clara Nell Hargrove. *The History of Macon, Georgia, 1823-1949*. Macon: Lyon, Marshall and Brooks Press, 1950.

²⁹ *Bibb County Will Book*, C:299.

³⁰ *Hancock County Deed Book*, W:658-661.

³¹ *Ibid.*, Z:90.

³² *Ibid.*, AA:84.

³³ *Ibid.*, BB:476.

³⁴ Moore, Mrs. Terrell. "Ante-Bellum Hancock Home: Granite Hill." *The Sparta Ishmaelite*, 20 April 1964.

³⁵ Edwards, Mary Roxie. *In Daddy Jesse's Kingdom*. Macon: The J.W. Burke Company, 1946, 9.

Granite Hill was constructed in the “High Greek Revival” architectural style.³⁶ Moore, writing for the *Sparta Ishmaelite*, described the house and surroundings in great detail:

The approach to the house (set on a beautiful elevation) was an avenue cut through a forest of original growth. Col. Lane is said to have planted trees along this avenue... The granite in building the house was quarried by hand; the timbers were pegged and mortised... The house is two full stories. The granite slabs or blocks of which the lower story is built area a foot and a half thick. The second story is clapboard.³⁷

She continued that the front steps were wooden and led to a porch that spanned a portion of the façade and concealed the ground floor entrance, “It is well that it should do so for an unbroken frontal line would leave the house monotonously square.” The porch’s roof was supported by four fluted columns and had rails, banisters and a parapet. The rear porch ran the entire width of the house, but by 1964 had been enclosed to accommodate modern amenities such as a bathroom, kitchen and pantry. A “chimney on legs” had been constructed to provide heat for these rooms: “[it] puts one in mind of Stonehenge as its foundation consists of two horizontal slabs laid on top of two vertical slabs.”³⁸

The interior of the house consisted of a central hall, 8’ wide, with doors at either end, and two rooms on either side. Stairs to the lower floor descended from the rear of the hallway, and “cornices of both front and rear sections are modestly patterned.” Both front rooms as well as the hallway had ornamental circular medallions on the ceiling, and mantels throughout the house “are of a simple pattern but...austerely handsome.” The chimneys were placed on the interior, thus forming “chimney nooks” in each of the four rooms. According to Mrs. Moore, this floor contained a number of closets, an unusual feature for the time period. The lower floor was situated in a similar manner, with a central hall and doors on either end. The floor of the hallway, kitchen and dining room were originally granite, but had been poured over with concrete. The remaining two rooms had wooden floors; presumably, these would have been bedrooms.

Rozier states the Granite Hill plantation house was moved to Holly Bluff near Macon in 1968 (Figure 4). It became the home of Prentiss S. Edwards, A. J. Lane’s great-grandson, through his daughter Mary Roxie Edwards. The entire house was relocated, including the large granite foundation stones “which were numbered and reconstructed near Macon.” As the house was being rebuilt the wooden portion burned. However, it was replicated on the original granite foundation.³⁹

³⁶ Linley, John. *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1972, 60.

³⁷ Moore.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Rozier, 176-179.

Situated to the rear of the house site is a two-story granite outbuilding (HABS No. GA-2396-A). The outbuilding has been referred to as a “Jail,” although it seems improbable that it functioned as such.⁴⁰ Moore describes the jail as a six-sided structure (actually, it is octagonal in design), two stories in height, constructed of large dressed stones similar to those used in the house. The jail misnomer may have been construed from the heavily barred windows; Moore proposes the unlikely scenario that the unmarried male slaves were locked in this building at night. Rozier, basing his description on Moore’s earlier account, also called this building the “Jail.”⁴¹

A contemporary description of Granite Hill plantation suggests an entirely different usage. A contributor to the *Southern Cultivator* visited Granite Hill in 1859 and remarked, “Everything there is of a permanent character, even to a two-story smoke house of handsomely dressed granite”.⁴² Another visitor to Granite Hill in 1861 also noted the “improvements” at Granite Hill; “his barn, smoke-house, dairy, etc. well deserve a premium.”⁴³ It is interesting that these two contemporary accounts single out the smokehouse. At ground level on the northeast façade of the structure is the frame for a small iron door. This door may be associated with the use of the structure as a smokehouse, which may have had an external heating source. Given the location of the octagonal building, immediately behind the house site, it may well have been for curing meat. Local historian Richard Joslyn has conducted preliminary investigations of octagonal structures in Hancock County. He suggests that Granite Hill’s octagonal structure may have been a “provision house.”⁴⁴

It is probable that, while the structure was used as a provision house, it may have been constructed or used for varying purposes during its life. In addition to a smoke house, the structure, primarily the second floor, may have been constructed as a dovecote, or at least modeled on one. The construction of dovecotes and the use of domesticated fowl for the table was not uncommon in the area. John Vlach’s analysis of plantation architecture notes the prevalence of dovecotes in the Georgia piedmont. Vlach references an 1835 plan of the Harris-Rives plantation near Sparta which depicted ten wooden “dove houses.” In nearby Lexington, Georgia, the Cox-Steward farm is described as having a “two story tower with pigeon roost above and storage space below.”⁴⁵ Vlach also notes the prevalence of dovecotes in Louisiana,

⁴⁰ Moore.

⁴¹ Rozier, 178.

⁴² *Southern Cultivator* 1859, 367.

⁴³ Ibid. 1861, 113.

⁴⁴ Jordon, William R. *Phase I Cultural Resources Survey, Proposed Granite Hill Quarry, Hancock County, Georgia*. Prepared by R.S. Webb and Associates. Holly Springs, Georgia, 2007, Appendix D.

⁴⁵ Vlach, John Michael. *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993, 83.

including the two-story, octagonal structure at the Parlange plantation in Pointe Coupee Parish. The dovecote, documented by A. E. Hoover and O. C. Kottemann in 1936 for the Historic American Buildings Survey, while constructed of brick, is nearly identical in form to the Granite Hill Plantation Provision House (Figure 5).

The reason for the unusual octagonal design remains a mystery. A. J. Lane subscribed and contributed to the *Southern Cultivator*. Quite possibly, he observed an article from that journal, "Plan of An Octagon House," published in 1852.⁴⁶ A number of that journal's early editions featured the country house plans by A. J. Downing, along with other design suggestions for outbuildings, barns and slave housing. As frequent contributors to the *Southern Cultivator*, Hancock County planters also submitted designs, such as John Bonner's "Southern Plantation Barn" and James B. Knox's "Georgia Gin House."⁴⁷

During recent analysis of Granite Hill's octagonal structure, Bowen noted "the precision with which [it] is constructed, and the many angles involved, suggest that highly skilled individuals performed the work."⁴⁸ A review of the 1860 Hancock County census reveals a number of local stone cutters or rock masons. As James Bonner observed, "the average age of the unmarried tradesman was comparatively high, because this group had the largest percentage of immigrants from other states and from foreign countries. Thirteen came from Ireland alone, and they dominated the stonemason trade in the vicinity."⁴⁹ Further research may reveal if Irish stonemasons emigrated to Hancock County for this reason.

VI. Granite Quarrying at Granite Hill Plantation

The quality and amount of granite available in the Sparta vicinity did not escape the attention of antebellum observers. George White noted that it occurred "in abundance."⁵⁰ The editors of *The Southern Cultivator* remarked that "The northern part of Hancock County presents many interesting geological features. Its rocks overlie a very firm crystalline granite which appears near Sparta."⁵¹ In her children's book *In Daddy Jesse's Kingdom*, Mary Roxie Edwards noted "There was one large flat rock that covered several acres back of the house" and that the

⁴⁶ *Southern Cultivator* 1852, 154-156.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 1852, 238-240 and Ibid. 1853, 262-262.

⁴⁸ Bowen, Neil J. and William R. Jordan. *Archival Documentation of Two Historic Structures, Granite Hill Hancock County, Georgia*. Prepared by R.S. Webb and Associates. Holly Springs, Georgia, 2005, 15.

⁴⁹ Bonner, James C. "Genesis of Agricultural Reform in the Cotton Belt." *Journal of Southern History* 9, no. 4 (1943): 475-500. 676.

⁵⁰ White, George. *Statistics of Georgia*. 1849, Baltimore, Maryland: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1969.

⁵¹ *Southern Cultivator* 1848, 24.

granite outcropping had a large hollow in it, “as big as a circus ring.”⁵² Perhaps this hollow was the source of granite used in construction of Granite Hill’s house and outbuildings. Likewise, hand tools were observed at the granite quarry sites identified by Jordan, and these sites may represent antebellum quarrying activities.⁵³

As evidenced by Granite Hill and numerous other residences in the vicinity, Sparta granite deposits were used locally to construct foundations and chimneys throughout the nineteenth century.⁵⁴ After the Civil War, small local quarries were established to provide crushed gravel for construction of the rail bed for the Macon and Augusta Railroad. When the Macon and Augusta was completed in 1868, the railroad, in turn, allowed quarried granite to be more readily and economically transported to other markets.

Granite quarrying did not develop as a major commercial industry in Georgia until the 1880s.⁵⁵ In 1888, W. B. Lee assumed management of one of the local Sparta quarries; he later supervised construction of a granite cotton gin near the Granite Hill railroad station. In 1900, George C. Smith wrote that “Hancock has fine quarries of granite, which have been utilized only in late years.”⁵⁶ In 1898, W. B. Lee purchased 1500 acres of the old Granite Hill plantation from the Middle Georgia Land and Immigration Company to establish a commercial quarry. In 1902, Lee subsequently leased the property to the Georgia Quincy Granite Company.

State geologists from the Geological Survey of Georgia visited the Granite Hill quarry that same year (1902) which they called the “New Quarry.”⁵⁷ They noted that the property had “rock outcrops as flat-surface, or sheet exposures over approximately eight acres of surface.” The surveyors also noted that the quarry extended over about three acres and that the “first raise” was being undertaken during the writer’s visit. The geologist continued that a “large working force was employed, and the stone was worked mostly into Belgian blocks and curbing for street use; although a small amount had been used in buildings and monuments.”⁵⁸ A half mile railroad spur, or “side-track” was built from the quarry to the Macon and Augusta line. The

⁵² Edwards, 9.

⁵³ Jordon.

⁵⁴ Rozeir.

⁵⁵ Watson, Thomas L. *Geological Survey of Georgia, Bulletin No.9-A. A Preliminary Report on a Part of the Granites and Gneisses of Georgia*. Atlanta: Franklin Printing and Publishing Company, 1902.

⁵⁶ Smith, George G. *The Story of Georgia and the Georgia People, 1732-1860*. Atlanta: Franklin Printing and Publishing Company, 1900, 211.

⁵⁷ Watson, 176.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 177.

granite curbing and paving stone was principally shipped to both Macon, Georgia and Tampa, Florida.

VII. Twentieth Century Granite Hill

In 1904, W. B. Lee sold his 383 acre tract (comprising the remaining portion of Granite Hill Plantation) to Carlos S. Duggan, who subsequently operated a dairy on the property.⁵⁹ There is no archival evidence of granite quarrying during Duggan's tenure. Carlos Duggan may have been related to Professor Mell L. Duggan, who in 1906 organized the 10th District Agricultural and Mechanical School, adjacent to the project area.⁶⁰ The dairy at Granite Hill was likely part of the "surrounding farm" used to educate the A&M vocational high school students. The Granite Hill A&M School operated until it was closed permanently at the end of the 1931-1932 academic year.⁶¹

The existing granite silo (HABS No. GA-2396-B) is bounded on one side by parallel rows of cinder blocks; this may be the remains of Duggan's dairy. The upper portion of the structure has concrete inscription that reads:

C. S. DUGGAN
Sept. 25, 17 J. T.

Importantly, the upper portion of the silo is constructed of granite Belgian-style blocks; these blocks were likely salvaged from earlier quarrying operations at Granite Hill. At present, we are uncertain if the unusual structure actually operated as a silo, or if it served another function in association with the dairy.

Duggan died while living on the property in 1925. Duggan's executor sold the property to S.F. Maddox in December 1928 and it remained in possession of the Maddox family until June 1996. An Agricultural Soil and Conservation Service (ASCS) map from 1942 shows a small quarry on the eastern quarter of the project tract which probably represents the old Georgia Quincy Granite Company's quarry. A review of the 1960 and 1973 ASCS maps shows the quarry had been greatly expanded during the 1950s-60s. Martin Marietta operated the gravel quarry until 1972.⁶² In 1996 M.D. Maddox and M.D. Rogers of Bibb County sold the tract to Pacific Coast Mines.⁶³ On 30 September 1998, Pacific Coast Mines transferred the study tract to

⁵⁹ Gaissert, John. "Down the Road: Granite Rock." *The Sparta Ishmaelite*. 7 January 1982.

⁶⁰ "Tenth District Agricultural and Mechanical School: Free White Co-Ed School." *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 3 December 1906. and Jordan, 10.

⁶¹ Shivers, 275.

⁶² Mark Davies, Rinker Materials, personal communication.

⁶³ Jordan, 13.

the Sparta Kaolin Corporation for \$250,000 and “other valuable consideration.”⁶⁴ Aggregates USA currently leases the tract from Sparta Kaolin Corporation.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

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IX. Project Information

In April 2008, Hodges, Harbin, Newberry, & Tribble, on behalf of Aggregates USA, Inc. contracted with Brockington and Associates, Inc., to prepare Historic American Building Survey (HABS) Level III Documentation of the two structures at the former Granite Hill Plantation. In addition, Brockington and Associates, Inc. was tasked with preparing Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) Level III Documentation of the four quarry sites on the former Granite Hill Plantation and to provide the documentation to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (GASHPO), National Park Service (NPS), Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and other interested parties as required under the National Historic Preservation Act. In December 2007 a Programmatic Agreement (PA) was signed by USACE, GASHPO, and Rinker Materials (now Aggregates USA) to mitigate the adverse effects of the proposed Granite Hill Quarry. The PA stipulated that the two structures and four quarry sites be documented to HABS/HAER specifications and be submitted to the National Park Service. Also as part of the PA, Brockington and Associates, Inc. conducted phase III archeological excavations at the Granite Hill Plantation site (9HK253).

The proposed development of the Granite Hill Quarry calls for the demolition of the two remaining structures. Aggregates USA, Inc. contracted with Lord, Aeck, Seargent Architects to conduct a feasibility study to explore moving the octagonal provision house. The four historic quarry sites will become part of the larger quarrying operation, and therefore also will be adversely affected through the quarrying of granite or support activities.

William M. Brockenbrough and F. Patricia Stallings, of Brockington and Associates, Inc., prepared the historical narrative of Granite Hill Plantation. Mr. Brockenbrough conducted the photographic documentation, and sketch plans of the two structures and four quarries. The historical research and photographic documentation was completed in May 2008 based on fieldwork completed in April 2008.

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Figure 1. U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute Sparta, Georgia Quadrangle
showing location of Granite Hill Plantation

